

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

The cold weather I am sure is bringing thoughts to your mind of the joyful times you are going to have when the snow comes. Just think, we had in Montreal the other morning the first installment of our winter supply of snow. It was so light, however, that it did not even leave a mark on the ground. Although winter does bring with it lots of enjoyment, still it lasts so long we get tired of it. Hurry up, little chicks, and write me some letters telling me what you are doing. Where is Rose? I have not heard for such a long while from her.

Your loving, AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Our little corner is very interesting this week. Isn't it nice to see such nice letters from the little cousins. Edna and Winifred M. like to see letters from Frampton. I'm glad, and will write again. But Harold wonders if those girls have any brothers, and if so to ask them to write to the corner. I send them all our love, to Edna and Winifred M. and also to Margaret F. I hope Edna and Winifred will come visit their cousins in Frampton some time. I think I am one of their little cousins, apart from the corner relationship.

Harold went out to the woods this afternoon to set snares for rabbits. This is the first time he tried catching rabbits. To-morrow is Stacey's birthday. She will be six years old. We have prepared a little surprise for her. Good-bye, Aunt Becky, I hope to hear from the little cousins again next week.

WINIFRED D. Frampton, Oct. 20, 1905.

(I do not particularly like the idea of setting traps for rabbits, or, in fact, for any animal. It is a pity to take liberty and life away from the poor little things. Kindness should be the first consideration, Winifred, dear.)

Dear Aunt Becky:

As I have been reading the letters of the True Witness and did not see any from Farnham I thought I would write one. I am 13 years old. I go to the convent. I have one brother and one sister. My brother is ten and my sister is seven years old. Papa is away most of the time, so that we are alone with mamma. My grandma lives on a farm seven miles from here, and we often go there and have a good time. Well, I think I will close now hoping to see my letter in print.

Your loving niece, LINA McN. Farnham, Que.

(I am glad to see Lina's name in our column this week. I hope she will be a regular contributor.)

JACK'S KNIGHTHOOD.

"Promise me one thing and I'll give it to you," said Uncle Boswell. "What?" hesitated Jack. "That you will perform a deed of chivalry every day this week." "Oh, but you can't now, Uncle Boswell!" said Jack. There aren't any princesses in distress or dragons to slay, and I haven't a charger or a sign of armor and spurs. "There are plenty of people in distress and, although they may not look it, some are, nevertheless, princesses in disguise," said the uncle. "You can tell them by their manner. Look for these, and if you are successful you will be much more clever than Sir Thomas Malory's knights. You have not only to rescue your princesses, you have to discover them."

Jack walked away with the set expression about his mouth which meant that he would do or die. For some time he had longed for Malory's tales of knightly deeds; and, although Uncle Boswell was always generous, especially where books were concerned, he usually had some original way for Jack to earn them, which even the boy confessed made them more worth while.

The end of the week came, and just as Uncle Boswell had decided that his nephew had failed this time, he heard voices outside his door. "Lean on me, grandpa," Jack was saying. "Lean hard when you step on your bad foot. It doesn't hurt me any. Lean hard's you can."

"You're a sight better than a cane, youngster," a thin old voice replied. "How did you come to think of it?" "I'm discovering princesses, and you're my seventh," Jack said, with a laugh, and the grandfather laughed too, at what he supposed was one of those jokes of the young people which are so hard for the old to understand.

"Come in!" said Uncle Boswell, a few minutes later. "I overheard one grateful princess's thanks." "Will that count?" said Jack eagerly. "Of course grandpa isn't a speck like a princess; but I needed one more feat to-day, and so I thought he would do. You noticed he had the right manners."

"It is very much to a young knight's credit," said the uncle, "to rescue a princess in the disguise of an old man, and especially one whose distress you have seen every day of your life and grown accustomed to. Now relate to me the tales of your other six quests."

"There was Miss Bell, the very first day," began Jack, settling himself in his favorite easy chair. "I knew her for a princess the very first second I saw her. I had never noticed before, but she has golden hair and white hands, and is full, fair and stately." At least she is when she walks, and I saw her walking first and recognized her as one. When she ran she wasn't so much so, for her face turned very red and her arms flopped. But she had to run because she was in distress, so of course it was all right. It was a cow she ran from—Frances Bassett's, you know. She's usually as quiet as a can; but I guess Miss Bell's running made her lively, and she thought it was a game."

"And what did you do?" asked the uncle, shaking with amusement. "Oh, I hollered, and the cow stopped to look at me; and by then Miss Bell had got into the road, and she thanked me in words just like real princesses used. I'd told her I was out hunting them up to rescue."

"But that's only two," suggested the uncle. "Another was the fruit woman," went on Jack. "She was very much disguised, of course; but she was in such terrible distress that I helped her out, never thinking, and from the way she spoke afterward I saw that she was a real princess."

"In these days," said the uncle, "when there are no castle windows to lean out of, and when cloth of gold is seldom seen, we have to judge by the heart and the manners." "That's what I thought," said Jack, quickly. "She didn't speak good grammar, but she seemed to have a princess's heart. You see she had just piled a lot of fruit—apples and oranges and pears and grapes—on her show stand, when down came the awning on her and the fruit and all you could see"—Jack chuckled at the remembrance—"were some kicking feet and a few muddy oranges."

"And then you pranced up on your cream white steed, with lance set," puffed Uncle Boswell. "I pranced up," said Jack, "frowning awfully at some jeering knaves, pulled off the awning, helped the princess up—my, but she was a sight, all mud and her hair frizzled!—and helped gather the spilled fruit. 'You be a gentleman,' she said; 'and all the saints bless you; and your manners are those of a prince of my country.' And she gave me an orange, after wiping the mud off on her red handkerchief. So then I saw that I had performed my feat for that day."

"And the other quests, sweet knight?" said the uncle. "In the others I'm not always sure that I have discovered the princess, because they weren't all women, but they all had the right manners." "That doesn't matter if they were in distress," said the uncle, "and gave you hearty thanks."

"One was a yellow cat," said Jack "with a tin tied to her tail." "Golden hand again," murmured Uncle Boswell.

"She purred her thanks for my unfastening the tin. And there was a clerk in the store whom I heard saying she was too busy to get a drink of water, so I brought her one. She looked like a common person until then, but the water seemed to change her to a shiny-eyed princess. There was blind Tom, feeling all around for the penny he had been given and dropped, and I found it for him, and because it didn't seem a very big feat I gave him another, oh, yes, the Miller baby was crying for the hell it had dropped and I picked

it up. Do those count? I'm not sure but what the Miller baby is a boy, and all he could do was to smile his thanks."

"Of course they count," said Uncle Boswell. "I dub thee knight, Sir Jack; and here is the book. Remember to continue your quests; for, if you turn a deaf ear to cries of distress, you may find that the book has mysteriously disappeared."

And soon Jack was far back in the enchanted days of knightly life, while his uncle, as he watched him, thought that his stubbed little heels were well worthy golden spurs.

A MOTHER BIRD'S HEROISM.

A sad story, and a brave one, was told by a lady in the eastern district to Mr. Dudley Le Soeuf, who has charge of the Zoological Gardens at Melbourn. A pair of black-and-white fantails, which we know better as wagtails, built their nest upon the branch of a willow tree. Nearly every country boy and girl knows the wagtail and its beautiful nest. It is a little black bird, with a white breast, and a fan tail that is never still for an instant. You see it sometimes on the backs of sheep and cattle, or playing round about them as they graze, and chattering all the time. Its nest is a perfect cup, made of twigs, and stuck together by cobwebs and warmly lined in the same way. They like to build their nests upon a bough overhanging the water, and if you go near it they chatter more than ever. These two wagtails built their nest upon the willow tree, and very soon there were four eggs in the nest—cream-colored eggs, with a grey rim around them. Three little ones were hatched, and the wagtails were quite happy hunting about all day for insects for their babies.

But one day—while the little wagtails were yet mere infants, half-covered with down and snuggling up together in the nest to keep each other warm—it began to rain. The floodwaters came down, and the pool under the willow rose higher, until the water soaked through the bottom of the wagtails' nest, and the little ones, unused to that strange chill, crawled about the nest and clung to the sides of it. But the rain went on, and the water rose higher. The poor little mother, chattering and protesting, fluttered about the nest that was so fast disappearing under the yellow waters. In despair, she settled down upon it, and spread her wings above her brood, but of what use were those frail wings to stop the rising flood. Soon only the mother's head was left above the water; the wet wings fluttered and tried to keep back the flood. Perhaps close to her brave little heart she could still feel the last struggles of her drowning babies! She could not save them, but she could die with them. And so with the last sigh of the green willows and the blue sky, and all the things that the birds love, telling her to save herself and still more desperately, put her wet breast down close to her dead brood, and so died with them. And the last sign was a little pearly bubble of air that rose through the rising water—the passing of the spirit of a bird.

When the waters went down there still was the sodden nest, the drowned bird mother and her little ones. Their tiny heads were raised to her, their mother's wings were still spread over them, her tiny claws with a grip that the fear of death could not loosen still clung to the side of the nest. But the sun which dried them could not warm them again to life.

When we human beings do a brave thing we do it sometimes with a sense of duty. Our sense of duty that each owes to his neighbor tells us that in a great crisis, however much we may love life, however much we may fear death, we must put all the thoughts that make us cowards to one side, and at all risks must do our duty. But the poor little wagtail that died so heroically in the willow tree at Hexham had no such inspiration as a sense of duty. It was just love for her little ones—pure love, a love that nothing in the world could destroy.—D. M., in the Australasian.

THE BOYS OF CHINA.

A stranger in China is struck with the number of children that he sees wearing earrings. On investigation he finds that most of the children are boys. As the grown boys and the men do not wear earrings the stranger inquires why the little boys wear them.

"To keep the spirits from carrying them off," say the Chinese philosopher. The stranger asks how earrings will keep the spirits from carrying the children off, and he hears this: "The boy is the greatest blessing that heaven can send. The spirits like boy babies. It is natural that they should; everybody likes them, very often if the boy babies are not watched closely the spirits who are constantly around grab up the unwatched boy baby and carry him off to their home. Girl babies are not such blessings, and the spirits care nothing for them. The earring is a feminine ornament, and the spirits know that, so the Chinese mothers have the ears of their boy babies pierced, and put in huge earrings. When the spirits are around looking for boys they will see the earrings and be fooled into thinking the boys are girls, and will pass on and not trouble them."

TEN RULES OF POLITENESS.

To be polite is to have a kind regard for the feelings and rights of others.

Be as polite to your parents, brothers, sisters and schoolmates as you are to strangers.

Look people fairly in the eyes when you speak to them, or they speak to you.

Do not bluntly contradict any one. It is not discourteous to refuse to do wrong.

Whispering, laughing, chewing gum, or eating at lectures, in school or at places of amusement, is rude and vulgar.

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NOT ACCORDING TO SAMPLE.

We were scattered about the smoking room of the liner in various postures of restful negligence. We had a big passenger list and there were some odd fish aboard, so we fell to talking about the peculiarities of some of our fellow travellers.

Prentice, the purser, broke in dogmatically. "A man's face and manner are samples of the good within. I've been on the North Atlantic run for years and seen a few people and I never knew a man who didn't carry the sample of himself either on his face or in his demeanor."

"I differ with you, Prentice," said McGregor, a sun-tanned Scotswoman who managed the affairs of a fruit company in the Caribbean and who had taken a flying trip to his native land. "I've been knocking about the world for some forty years and I am not labeling a man good, bad, brave or cowardly on sight. I've been badly fooled once or twice."

"It happened fifteen years ago," began McGregor, lighting a fresh cigar, "and I was chief cook and bottle washer on a ramshackle old tub of a steamer plying between Mexico and Colombian ports. That is to say, I was a mix of supercargo, purser and fruit buyer when we reached port. That voyage was a memorable one, for, besides five passengers in the cabin, I had five tons of gunpowder in the forehold, and the powder paid a better freight than the passengers."

"There were two Mexicans who, when they were not eating or sleeping, were rolling and smoking cigarettes, a pompous old Englishman was trying to get to Demerara and who had an opinion about everything and wanted everybody to chuck their own ideas overboard and adopt his. He had his valet with him. Fifth passenger was a padre or priest, Padre Ambrose. He was the most submissive, humble, no-account sort of a man I ever met. He was very thin and pock-marked in the face besides, he carried one shoulder higher than the other. Nature had been unkind to Padre Ambrose. He wore a rusty old soutane that looked as if it had earned retirement and a pension and he perpetually carried in his hand a thumb-worm, dirty little book which he called his breviary. He generally read this book when on deck, but even when he was not reading it he seemed afraid to raise his eyes from his feet. Not once, yes, once, but that comes later, did he look me in the face."

"He seemed afraid to assert himself even in defense of his Church, for the old Englishman was a bigoted low churchman and several times had criticized the Catholic Church in the padre's presence without eliciting a word from Padre Ambrose. I felt a contempt for the man. I never relished my milk and water characters and I thought here was a man who became a priest because he was unworthy to be anything else among men."

"I come of good old Covenant stock myself, but I've no prejudice against the Roman priesthood. I've been most of my life in countries where they are as thick as bananas, and I've learned to respect them hugely. There's a strange paradoxical mixture of submission to authority and possession of authority among them that is wonderful. I have seen a padre who would incessantly start out for the uttermost ends of the earth at the command of his provincial without daring even to think about it, rush into the street and snatch two Mexicans apart ready to carve each other with their matchets, shake his finger under their noses and send them eluding away. I'll tell you, gentlemen, the Latin race must be Catholic or nothing; no other religion can possibly fit it. I've spouted these wise remarks to show I was not prejudiced against Padre Ambrose because he

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was a priest, but because he seemed an unworthy one for such a high calling. "It's all on account of the blooming fasting these priests do," said our captain, pointing to the padre. "I suppose that poor beggar has had nothing to eat but bananas and garlic all his life till his spirit is killed. If he'd eaten a pound or two of good English roast beef every day he'd be a different man."

"We were half way to Colombia when, one sultry morning, one of the steam pipes blew off with a bang and killed the stoker. We didn't mind this so much, as stokers are cheap and plentiful, but we were disabled. The engineer tinkered at the machinery, which was fit for scrap iron, and gave it up. Then some one yelled that the boat was afire and the engineer and stokers came flying on deck, for they all knew about the powder in the forehold. It was get away from that volcano quickly as possible or be blown up and the boats went over with a will. No one tried to put out the fire; there was no time for that. The old tub was insured and the freight on the powder was prepaid, so it was get away everybody. We had the passengers in the boats and then the crew. I looked around the deck and saw Padre Ambrose moving toward the hatch.

"Padre," I shouted, "to the boat, quick, there's not a minute to waste." "Amigo," he said quietly, "there's a man in the stockhold who was reported killed. I am informed that while he is dying, he is not yet dead." "He can't be saved," I shouted; "too late. Come, get in the boat." "If I have the time," continued the padre, "I will administer the last rites of the Church to this man. I trust God will allow me time to do so."

"I snatched at his soutane but it was so old that it tore, and the padre hastened down the ladder into the stockhold. "I shouted to him and then he looked me straight in the eyes and his eyes were glowing and bright. I shall never forget that glance. Then he disappeared. The captain was shouting for me, and I slid down the rope into the boat, which was lustily pulled a safe distance from the burning hull. "There was a dull, heavy explosion and the old fruit steamer rose amidships as if in agony and then the two halves sank beneath the waves. "Where is the padre?" asked the captain, looking around at the boats. "I told him what had happened. "He was a man after all," said he, and then he lifted his hat, and stood bareheaded in the boat for a few moments; "he was a man after all," he repeated. "Padre Ambrose was not according to sample."—Men and Women.

PRUDENT MOTHERS.

The prudent mother will never give her child a sleeping draught, soothing medicine or opiate of any kind except by order of a competent doctor who has seen the child. All soothing medicines and sleeping draughts contain deadly poison, an overdose will kill a child, and they never do good, as they only stupefy and do not cure. Sleeplessness in little ones usually comes from teething troubles or derangements of the stomach or bowels, that can be speedily cured by Baby's Own Tablets. And the mother should remember that this is the only medicine for children that gives a solemn guarantee that there is not a particle of opiate or harmful drug in its composition. Mrs. A. Scott, Bradwardine, Man., says: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets for diarrhoea, teething troubles and constipation, and find them just the thing to make little ones well and keep them well." Sold by all druggists or by mail at 25 cents by writing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

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